DARK HORSE COMICS

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#9

THE GOON™

by Eric Powell

The nameless man, the zombie priest, had come to town to build a gang from the undead. But even the undead fear...

THE GOON™

by Eric Powell

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THE HISTORY OF THE DOCKSIDE FIGHTING FISH-CANNERS AND THE END OF THE BLACK HAND

BY
LANTON PEABODY

NOT SO WELL REMEMBERED IN THIS DREARY LITTLE BURG IS THE JOY THAT THE INAUGURAL SEASON OF OUR BELOVED FIGHTING FISH-CANNERS BROUGHT TO ITS DOWNTRODDEN AND DEJECTED INHABITANTS. IN THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE OF DREAD BROUGHT ON BY THE INSURGENCE OF THE NAMELESS MAN, THE ZOMBIE PRIEST, AND HIS UNDEAD HORDES, IT MAY BE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR US TO RECALL THAT NOT-SO-DISTANT PAST WHEN WE LIVED IN FEAR, NOT OF NIGHT TERRORS AND THE WALKING DEAD, BUT OF THE BLACK HAND, THE FACTIONS OF CUTTHROATS AND MURDERERS THAT MILKED OUR CITIZENS FOR THEIR OWN UNSCRUPULOUS GAIN. IT WAS IN THAT DESPERATE TIME OF FEAR THAT THE LATE, GREAT HARLEY LABEAU FORMED OUR BELOVED FISH-CANNERS AND UNWITTINGLY BROUGHT THE BLACK HAND TO ITS KNEES WITH THE HELP OF A MAN KNOWN SIMPLY AS THE GOON.

BACK BEFORE THE LABRAZIO GANG AND THE ZOMBIES HAD A MONOPOLY ON THIS TOWN'S SHADIER ENTERPRISES, THE BLACK HAND WAS SPLIT INTO FOUR FACTIONS.

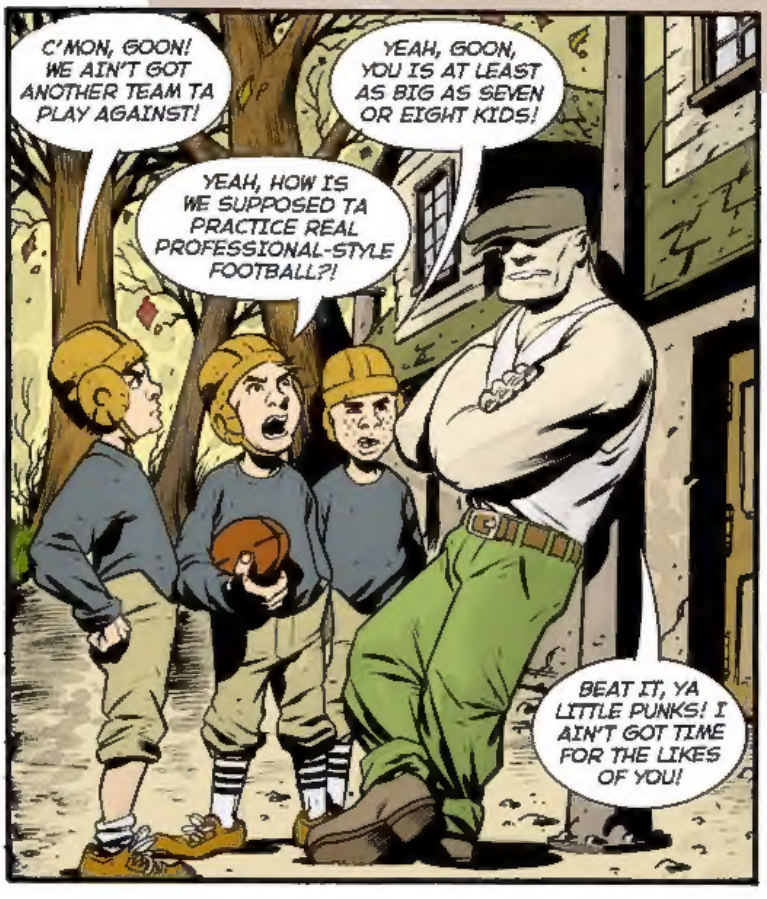
THE DANTINI FAMILY, RUN BY DON MARKO DANTINI, THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE FOUR FAMILIES.

THE CALABRESI FAMILY, RUN BY DON DARIO CALABRESI.

THE FERRARA FAMILY, RUN BY DON SALVADOR FERRARA.

AND THE UPSTART LABRAZIO FAMILY, RUN BY A MAN WITH THE REPUTATION OF BEING ONE OF THE MOST BRUTAL AND FEARED KILLERS WITHIN THE BLACK HAND, GAETAN LABRAZIO. HOWEVER, LABRAZIO HAD NOT BEEN SEEN IN SOME TIME. IT WAS REPORTED THAT HE HAD GONE INTO HIDING AND WAS RUNNING THE GANG BY PROXY THROUGH HIS TOP MUSCLE, THE GOON.

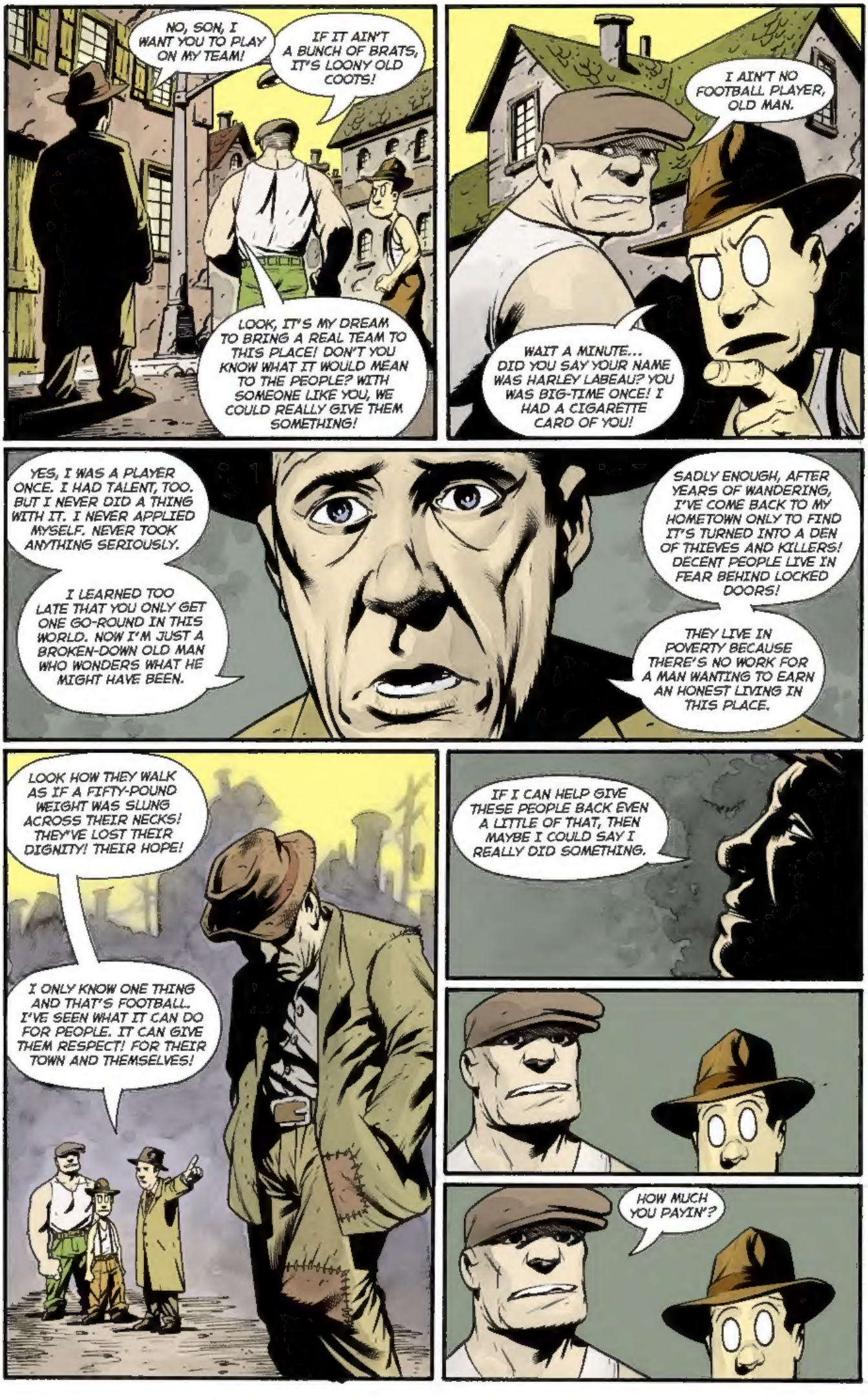
IT WAS THE CHANCE MEETING OF LABEAU AND THE GOON THAT MARKS THE MOST BEWILDERING EVENT IN THE ENTIRE SAGA. IT IS STILL UNKNOWN HOW THE COACH CONVINCED THE RUFFIAN TO JOIN IN HIS ENDEAVOR. IT SEEMS TO THIS REPORTER THAT PLAYING A KIDDIE GAME OF PASS THE PIGSKIN WOULD BE THE FURTHEST THING FROM YOUR MIND WHEN EVERY RIVAL HOOD IN THE BURG HAS YOU FITTED FOR A PAIR OF CEMENT SHOES.


C'MON, GOON! WE AIN'T GOT ANOTHER TEAM TA PLAY AGAINST!
YEAH, GOON, YOU IS AT LEAST AS BIG AS SEVEN OR EIGHT KIDS!
YEAH, HOW IS WE SUPPOSED TA PRACTICE REAL PROFESSIONAL-STYLE FOOTBALL?!
BEAT IT, YA LITTLE PUNKS! I AIN'T GOT TIME FOR THE LIKES OF YOU!

WHY NOT?! WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN REAL PROFESSIONAL-STYLE FOOTBALL?!
WAITIN' FOR FISH-FACE MCGEE TA GET HOME SO I CAN BREAK HIS FINGERS FOR BEIN' TWO WEEKS LATE ON HIS PAYMENT, THAT'S WHAT! NOW SCRAM!

BUT MCGEE GOT RAN OVER BY A BUS THIS MORNIN'.
YEAH, SQUASHED FLAT.
DEAD AS A POST.
AW, FER CHRIST!
C'MON, NOW YOU CAN PLAY!
GET LOST!
AW, LOOK, FELLAS, THE BIG BAD LEG BREAKER IS AFRAID OF US!
GUESS HE KNOWS REAL-LIVE PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL TYPES WHEN HE SEES 'EM!
BWAUK! BWAUK! BWAUK!
WHEN YOUR MOMMAS ARE SPOON-FEEDIN' YOU PUNKS CORN MASH IN THE HOSPITAL, DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YA.
STOP HIM!
AH!
YOU STOP HIM!

AH! I DONE RUPTURED SOMETHIN'!
THAT BOY'S A BEHEMOTH!
THAT'LL LEARN YOU TA SASS ME!
GOON, WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'?! WE GOT BIGGER FISH TA FRY!
BONK!
DID YOU KNOW FISH-FACE MCGEE GOT HIT BY A BUS?
YEAH, CONSIDERIN' I'M THE GUY THAT HIT 'IM.
HOW ARE WE GONNA GET PAID IF YOU RUN HIM OVER WITH A BUS?!
THERE ARE SOME PLEASURES IN LIFE YOU JUST CAN'T PUT A PRICE ON. NAILING A TWO-BIT HOOD LIKE MCGEE GOOD AND PROPER WITH A BUS IS ONE OF 'EM.
EXCUSE ME, YOUNG FELLA. THE NAME'S HARLEY LABEAU. I'M STARTING UP A PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL ORGANIZATION AND I THINK A MAN OF YOUR ABILITIES WOULD FIND--
YOU WANT ME TA BREAK YOUR OPPONENTS' LEGS? THAT'S A GRAND.


NO, SON, I WANT YOU TO PLAY ON MY TEAM!
IF IT AIN'T A BUNCH OF BRATS, IT'S LOONY OLD COOTS!
LOOK, IT'S MY DREAM TO BRING A REAL TEAM TO THIS PLACE! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT IT WOULD MEAN TO THE PEOPLE? WITH SOMEONE LIKE YOU, WE COULD REALLY GIVE THEM SOMETHING!
I AIN'T NO FOOTBALL PLAYER, OLD MAN.
WAIT A MINUTE... DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS HARLEY LABEAU? YOU WAS BIG-TIME ONCE! I HAD A CIGARETTE CARD OF YOU!
YES, I WAS A PLAYER ONCE. I HAD TALENT, TOO. BUT I NEVER DID A THING WITH IT. I NEVER APPLIED MYSELF. NEVER TOOK ANYTHING SERIOUSLY.
I LEARNED TOO LATE THAT YOU ONLY GET ONE GO-ROUND IN THIS WORLD. NOW I'M JUST A BROKEN-DOWN OLD MAN WHO WONDERS WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.
SADLY ENOUGH, AFTER YEARS OF WANDERING, I'VE COME BACK TO MY HOMETOWN ONLY TO FIND IT'S TURNED INTO A DEN OF THIEVES AND KILLERS! DECENT PEOPLE LIVE IN FEAR BEHIND LOCKED DOORS!
THEY LIVE IN POVERTY BECAUSE THERE'S NO WORK FOR A MAN WANTING TO EARN AN HONEST LIVING IN THIS PLACE.
LOOK HOW THEY WALK AS IF A FIFTY-POUND WEIGHT WAS SLUNG ACROSS THEIR NECKS! THEY'VE LOST THEIR DIGNITY! THEIR HOPE!
I ONLY KNOW ONE THING AND THAT'S FOOTBALL. I'VE SEEN WHAT IT CAN DO FOR PEOPLE. IT CAN GIVE THEM RESPECT! FOR THEIR TOWN AND THEMSELVES!
IF I CAN HELP GIVE THESE PEOPLE BACK EVEN A LITTLE OF THAT, THEN MAYBE I COULD SAY I REALLY DID SOMETHING.
HOW MUCH YOU PAYIN'?

THIS SCHOOL IS ALLOWING ME A FEW HOURS A DAY TO USE THEIR PRACTICE FIELD.
HERE, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY FIRST PROSPECT. THIS IS ART MOON, STAR QUARTERBACK FROM MULELICK!
I THOUGHT FOOTBALL PLAYERS WAS SUPPOSED TA BE TOUGH GUYS. THIS FELLA LOOKS LIKE AN IVY-LEAGUE PRETTY BOY TA ME.
EXCUSE ME, SIR, I KNOW I DON'T LOOK LIKE THE TOUGHEST FELLA TO COME DOWN THE BLOCK, BUT I WON'T LET YOU DOWN. JUST GIMME A CHANCE TO PLAY.
OKAY, PRETTY BOY! HERE I AM! LAY IT ON ME! LET'S SEE WHAT YA GOT! IS YOUR ARM TOO TIRED FROM PLANTIN' DAISIES WITH YER MOTHER ALL DAY?!

AAA
SWAP!
ARM LIKE A CANNON!
SAY, THAT'S PRETTY GOOD.
C'MON, HARLEY. THIS GUY'LL DO FOR THROWIN' THE BALL AROUND, BUT YOU WANT SOME TOUGH GUYS, I CAN SHOW YA TOUGH GUYS. I KNOW A FELLA THAT'LL BREAK A MAN'S NECK FOR SOME POTATO CAKES.
WHAT ARE WE DOIN' HERE, GOON?!
YEAH, WE DON'T GOT NO BEEF WITH YOU!
WHAT GIVES?!
HURRY THIS UP, WILL YA! IT'S TIME FOR MY MA TA GET HER CORNS RUBBED AND SHE GETS CRANKY WHEN I AIN'T THERE TA DO IT!
GET HIM! DEVOTED SON, OR FREAK WHO LIKES TA HANDLE OLD LADIES' FEET! WHATTA YOU THINK?
I THINK HIS MOTHER LIVES DOWN MY BLOCK AND I'VE SEEN SEXIER HOOVES ON A PIG.

HERE'S THE DEAL, SEE. THIS FELLA WANTS TA START UP A FOOTBALL TEAM AND WE'RE GONNA HELP HIM OUT.
WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?!
WHAT FOR?!
GOON'S GONE BATTY!
AT SOME POINT I'VE TURNED A BLIND EYE FOR ALL OF YOU BOYS. I'M CALLIN' IN THE FAVOR. BESIDES, THERE'S A LITTLE MONEY IN IT.
HOW LITTLE?!
LITTLE ENOUGH FOR YOU, ZEKE! YOU POTATO-CAKE-EATIN' MUTT!
HA! HA! HA!
WHAT THE HELL, BOYS! IT MIGHT BE FUN! COUNT ME IN!
WELL IF HE'S DOIN' IT, I AM!
ARE YOU SURE THESE ARE THE GUYS WE NEED? THEY DON'T LOOK THE ATHLETIC TYPE.
IS THE OBJECTIVE TO BEAT THE TAR OUT OF THE OTHER TEAM?
WELL, YES, SORT OF.
THEN THESE ARE THE BOYS YOU NEED.

AND THE INAUGURAL LINEUP WAS CAST.

AL "PRETTY BOY" MOON
QUARTERBACK, CORNERBACK/
KICKER

GOON
HALFBACK /
LINEBACKER

RAY "BLOODY" NABRANSKI
FULLBACK / LINEBACKER

BUDDY BRACHALSKE
TIGHT END / LINEBACKER

JOHNNY "BRICK HEAD" DAVIS
WIDE RECEIVER /
CORNERBACK

WOODY MCNAGLE
WIDE RECEIVER / SAFETY

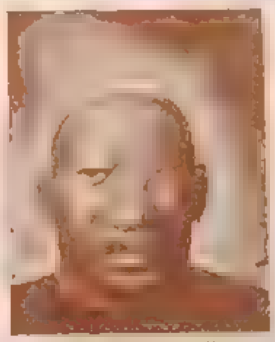
FREDDY "THE FINK" FINKLE
WIDE RECEIVER / SAFETY

ZEKE "POTATO CAKE" HERBERT
CENTER,
DEFENSIVE TACKLE

CECIL DEWLER
GUARD / DEFENSIVE END

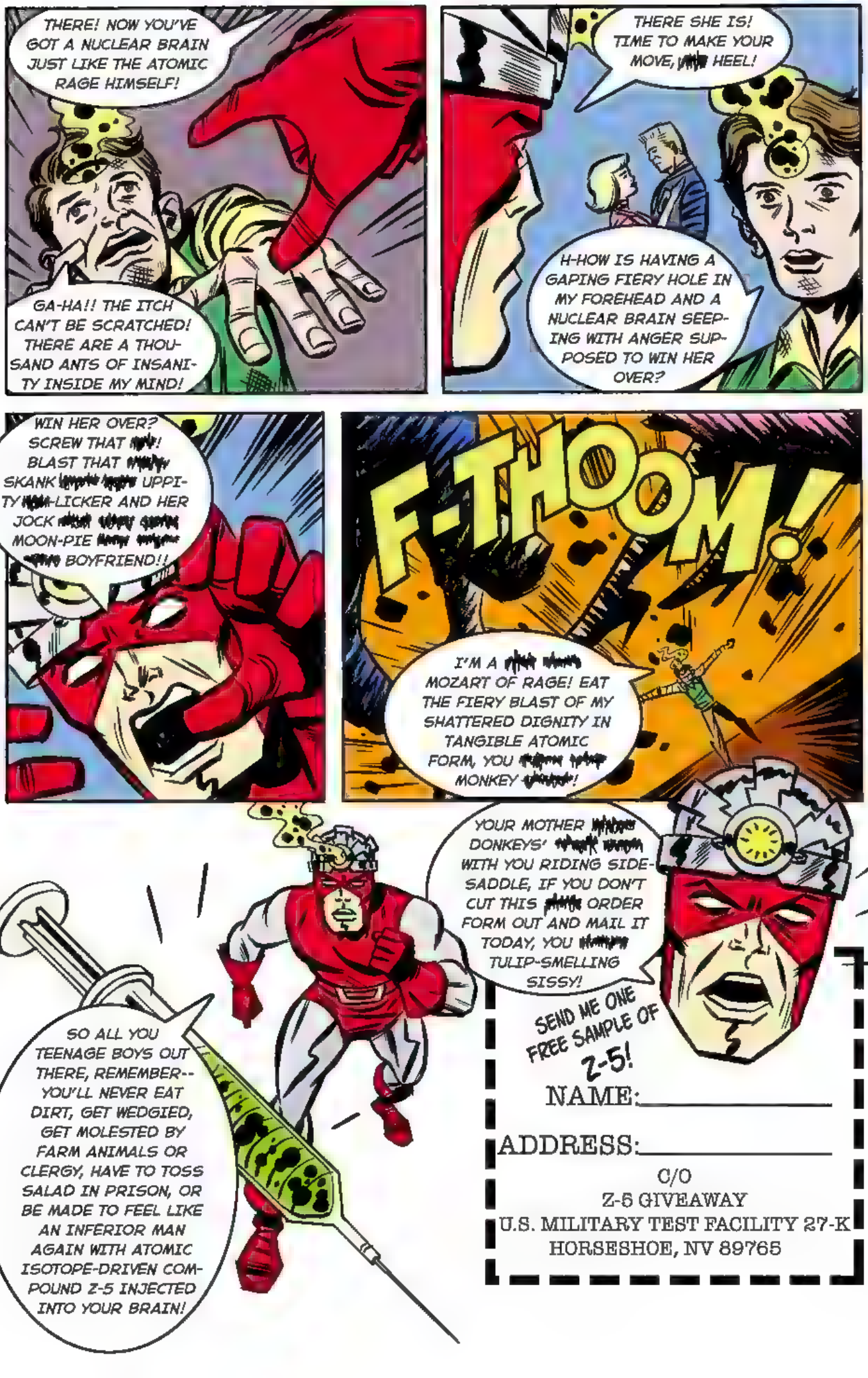
ARNIE CUBBARD
GUARD / DEFENSIVE END

DICK BOYD
TACKLE /
DEFENSIVE TACKLE



WILLIE HINKLE
TACKLE
DEFENSIVE TACKLE

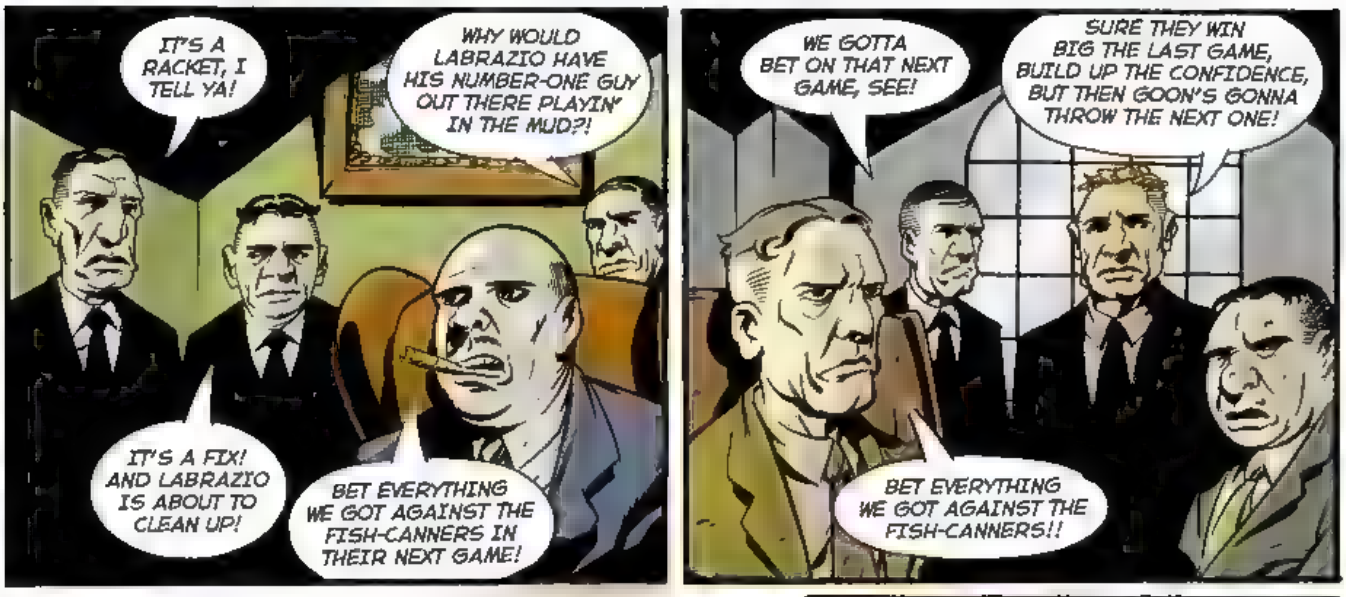
H-HEATHER, C-COULD I TAKE YOU OUT FOR A MALTED?
GET LOST, YOU LITTLE WEASEL! I ONLY DATE REAL MEN!
YEAH, EAT DIRT, LOSER!
GAG! HACK!
WHY DO YOU HATE ME, GOD?! I STOPPED TOUCHING MYSELF!
WHAT THE [illegible] ARE YOU [illegible] CRYING ABOUT, YOU [illegible] SISSY?!
THE ATOMIC RAGE!
MR. RAGE, I'M LONELY AND NO GIRLS LIKE ME. I GUESS THE ONLY ANSWER IS TO BLOW THE BACK OF MY HEAD OFF WITH DAD'S SHOTGUN.
HOLD ON THERE, SON. WHAT YOU NEED IS SOME [illegible] COMPOUND Z-5!
Z-5
IT'S FULL OF THE [illegible] RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPES THAT MADE ME THE [illegible] I AM TODAY!
SIMPLY INJECT THE ISOTOPES DIRECTLY INTO THE BRAIN!
GAH! IT BURNS!!
SHHH! JUST RELAX AND LET Z-5 DO ITS WORK, YOU [illegible]-SUCKING FAIRY.


THERE! NOW YOU'VE GOT A NUCLEAR BRAIN JUST LIKE THE ATOMIC RAGE HIMSELF!
GA-HA!! THE ITCH CAN'T BE SCRATCHED! THERE ARE A THOUSAND ANTS OF INSANITY INSIDE MY MIND!
THERE SHE IS! TIME TO MAKE YOUR MOVE, [illegible] HEEL!
H-HOW IS HAVING A GAPING FIERY HOLE IN MY FOREHEAD AND A NUCLEAR BRAIN SEEPING WITH ANGER SUPPOSED TO WIN HER OVER?
WIN HER OVER? SCREW THAT [illegible]! BLAST THAT [illegible] SKANK [illegible] UPPITY [illegible]-LICKER AND HER JOCK [illegible] MOON-PIE [illegible] BOYFRIEND!!
F-THOOM!
I'M A [illegible] MOZART OF RAGE! EAT THE FIERY BLAST OF MY SHATTERED DIGNITY IN TANGIBLE ATOMIC FORM, YOU [illegible] MONKEY [illegible]!
SO ALL YOU TEENAGE BOYS OUT THERE, REMEMBER-- YOU'LL NEVER EAT DIRT, GET WEDGIED, GET MOLESTED BY FARM ANIMALS OR CLERGY, HAVE TO TOSS SALAD IN PRISON, OR BE MADE TO FEEL LIKE AN INFERIOR MAN AGAIN WITH ATOMIC ISOTOPE-DRIVEN COMPOUND Z-5 INJECTED INTO YOUR BRAIN!
YOUR MOTHER [illegible] DONKEYS' [illegible] WITH YOU RIDING SIDE-SADDLE, IF YOU DON'T CUT THIS [illegible] ORDER FORM OUT AND MAIL IT TODAY, YOU [illegible] TULIP-SMELLING SISSY!
SEND ME ONE FREE SAMPLE OF Z-5!
NAME:_____
ADDRESS:_____
C/O
Z-5 GIVEAWAY
U.S. MILITARY TEST FACILITY 27-K
HORSESHOE, NV 89765

BUT THE REAL OBJECT OF RUMOR AND DEBATE WAS HOW THE TEAM CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE FIGHTING FISH-CANNERS.
WE'VE GOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM. IT TOOK EVERY DIME I RAISED JUST TO BUY OUR WAY INTO THE LEAGUE! I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT FOR EQUIPMENT!
C'MON. I KNOW A GUY.
OF COURSE I WILL SPONSOR THE TEAM! ONLY YOU KEEP THE BLACK HAND OFF MY BACK, GOON! THEY WOULD HAVE BROKEN ME BY NOW IF NOT FOR YOU!
ANDOLINI'S FISH CANNERY
SURE, I PAY YOU, BUT YOU KEEP IT REASONABLE! AND IT IS WELL WORTH IT TO KNOW THE GOON IS KEEPING ME SAFE! MY MOTHER, SHE PRAY FOR YOU EVERY NIGHT!
THE FISH-CANNERS? NOT A VERY INTIMIDATING NAME.
IT AIN'T THE NAME, IT'S THE REP.

THE VERY FIRST GAME OF THIS UPSTART LINEUP WAS A STUNNING 42-3 VICTORY OVER THE HEAVILY FAVORED OPPONENT. SEVERAL INJURIES OCCURED DURING THE COURSE OF THE GAME ALL OF WHICH, ODDLY ENOUGH, HAPPENED TO THE OPPOSING TEAM. NABRANSKI WAS EJECTED FROM THE GAME FOR KIDNEY PUNCHING THE REFEREE, AND GOON SET A FRANCHISE RUSHING RECORD OF 423 YARDS, WHICH STILL HAS NOT BEEN BROKEN TO THIS DAY.

BUT IT WAS THIS EARLY SUCCESS AND GOON'S INVOLVEMENT THAT CAUGHT THE EYE OF THE LABRAZIO GANG'S RIVAL FAMILIES... THE CALABRESI AND THE FERRARA.

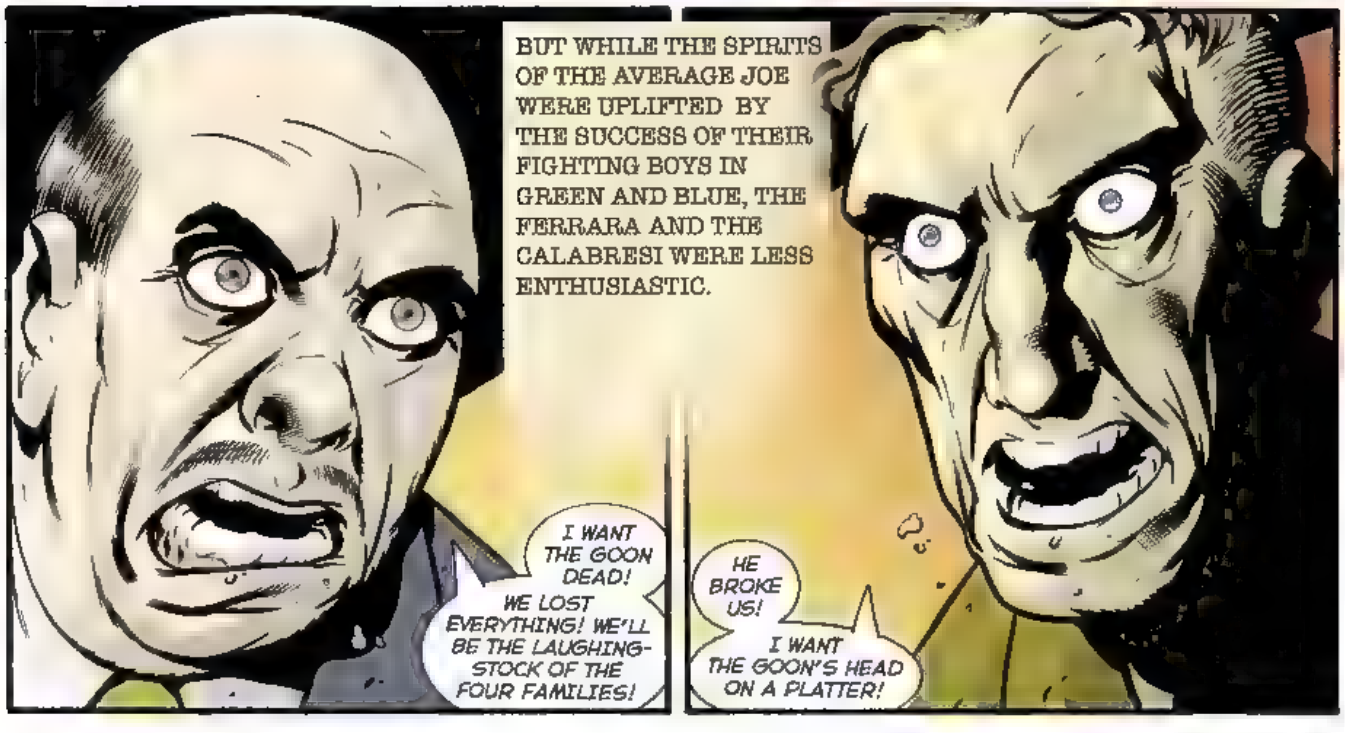

IT'S A RACKET, I TELL YA!
WHY WOULD LABRAZIO HAVE HIS NUMBER-ONE GUY OUT THERE PLAYIN' IN THE MUD?!
IT'S A FIX! AND LABRAZIO IS ABOUT TO CLEAN UP!
BET EVERYTHING WE GOT AGAINST THE FISH-CANNERS IN THEIR NEXT GAME!
WE GOTTA BET ON THAT NEXT GAME, SEE!
SURE THEY WIN BIG THE LAST GAME, BUILD UP THE CONFIDENCE, BUT THEN GOON'S GONNA THROW THE NEXT ONE!
BET EVERYTHING WE GOT AGAINST THE FISH-CANNERS!!

THE CANNERS' NEXT OUTING WAS ALMOST AS IMPRESSIVE AS THEIR FIRST AS THEY POUNDED THEIR WAY TO A 32-7 VICTORY. AGAIN THE TEAM DOMINATED WITH THE GOON'S DOZER-LIKE RUNNING AND BRUTAL DEFENSIVE PLAY.

TO A POPULACE OF THE IMPOVERISHED LIVING IN FEAR, THE FISH-CANNERS BECAME A REASON TO GET UP IN THE MORNING...

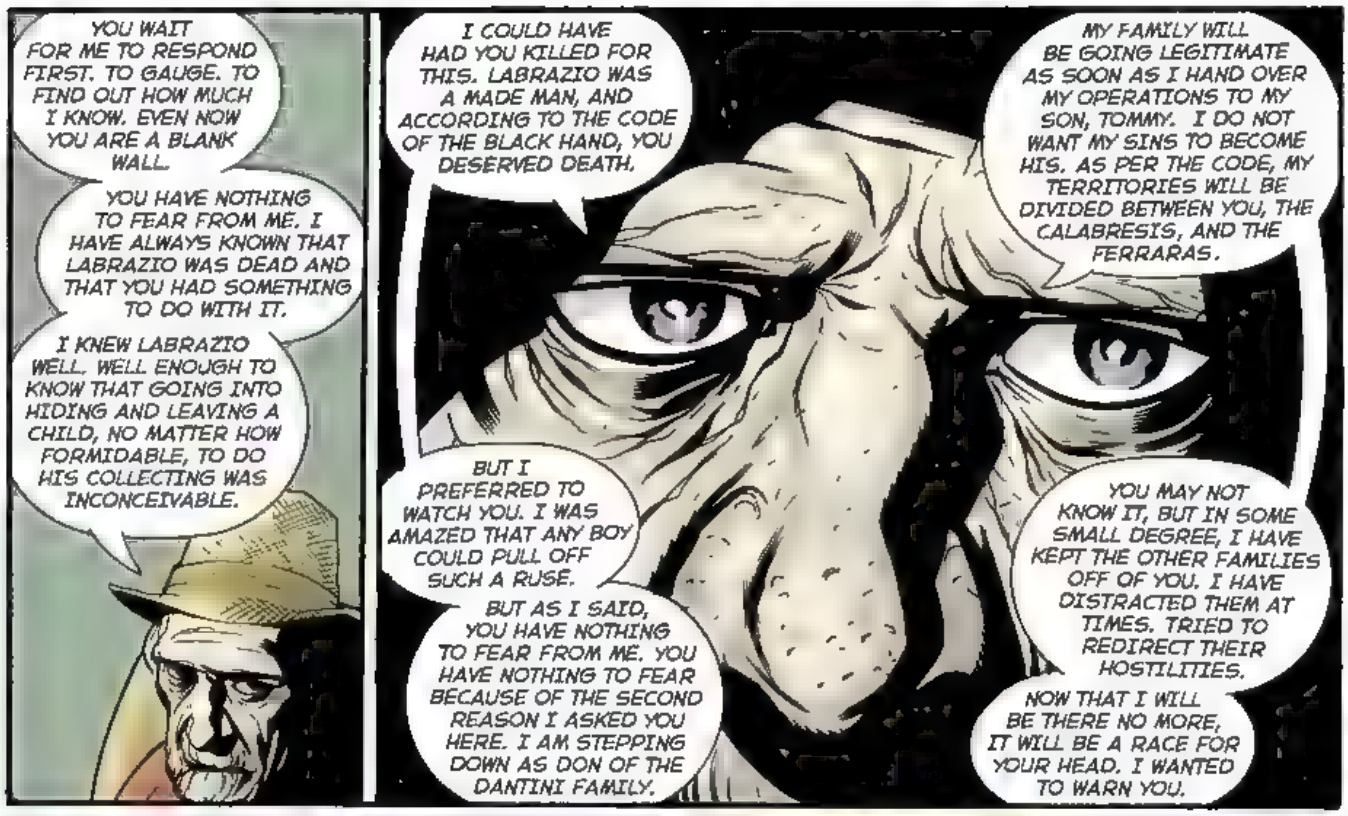
DID YOU HEAR THE CANNERS' GAME ON THE RADIO LAST NIGHT?! THEY SLAUGHTERED THOSE KALAMAZOO BOYS!
THEY AIN'T GONNA COME DOWN HERE AND WHIP US! YOU GOTTA BE TOUGH TA LIVE IN THIS TOWN!

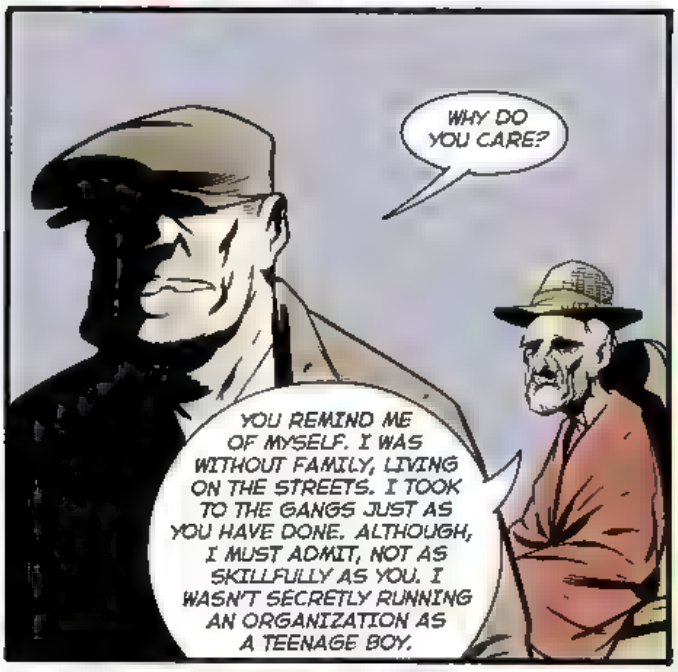
BUT WHILE THE SPIRITS OF THE AVERAGE JOE WERE UPLIFTED BY THE SUCCESS OF THEIR FIGHTING BOYS IN GREEN AND BLUE, THE FERRARA AND THE CALABRESI WERE LESS ENTHUSIASTIC.


I WANT THE GOON DEAD!
WE LOST EVERYTHING! WE'LL BE THE LAUGHING-STOCK OF THE FOUR FAMILIES!
HE BROKE US!
I WANT THE GOON'S HEAD ON A PLATTER!

LIFE ON THE STREETS WAS BECOMING A LOT MORE DANGEROUS FOR THE GOON BY PARTICIPATING IN HARLEY'S CIVIC ENDEAVOR HE UNWITTINGLY STRUCK A BLOW TO THE FINANCES OF HIS GANGLAND COMPETITORS THAT COULD NOT GO UNANSWERED.
IT'S CHARLIE NOODLES'S SIGNAL FROM DOWNSTAIRS! SOMEBODY'S COMIN' UP!
TAP! TAP! TAP!
I BET IT'S THE STINKIN' FERRARAS AGAIN! I'LL FILL 'EM FULL OF LEAD!
KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!
YEAH, WHATTA YA WANT?!
THIS IS TOMMY DANTINI ... SON OF DON DANTINI. I COME ALONE... AND UNARMED, ON BEHALF OF MY FATHER.
STEP IN WITH YOUR HANDS ABOVE YOUR HEAD.
IT REALLY IS HIM.
MY FATHER WISHES A COUNCIL WITH THE GOON.
SLAM!
THERE IS A CAR WAITING FOR YOU DOWNSTAIRS. I AM TO STAY HERE AS FRANKY'S HOSTAGE UNTIL YOU RETURN. A GUARANTEE OF HIS HONORABLE INTENTIONS.
KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON HIM, FRANKY. I'M GONNA TALK TO THE OLD MAN.

DON, THE GOON IS HERE.
AH, HELLO, GOON. IT IS A PLEASURE TO FINALLY BE ABLE TO MEET YOU IN PERSON. THE YOUNG MAN WITH SUCH A REPUTATION. HAVE A SEAT.
I'LL STAND.
IF YOU WISH.
I HEAR ODD STORIES THESE DAYS.
ABOUT SOME RACKET WITH YOU PLAYING IN BALL GAMES. I HEAR THE CALABRESIS AND FERRARAS HAVE LOST QUITE A BIT OF MONEY.
THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE BET AGAINST ME. AND IT AIN'T AN ANGLE.
YES, I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE NOT THE MAN TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. BUT YOU KNOW THEY WILL KILL YOU FOR THIS.
ALL OF YOU HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DO THAT FOR A LONG TIME. I AIN'T DEAD YET.
:SIGH: THE ARROGANCE OF YOUTH.
I WON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH ANY LONGER. I HAVE BROUGHT YOU HERE FOR TWO REASONS. ONE...
WHY DID YOU KILL LABRAZIO?
SMART. SO SMART. EVERYONE TAKES YOU AS A HIRED FOOL. A WITLESS GORILLA PAID TO BREAK LEGS. I ALWAYS KNEW BETTER.
YOU KNOW ANY ANSWER YOU GIVE ME CAN GIVE YOU AWAY. I HAVE WORKED WITH LIARS FOR TOO LONG. SO YOU GIVE ME THE ONLY ANSWER YOU CAN... NONE. NOT EVEN A TWITCH OF THE LIP. NOT EVEN A SLIGHT GASP. SMART AND CONTROLLED YOU ARE.


YOU WAIT FOR ME TO RESPOND FIRST. TO GAUGE. TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH I KNOW. EVEN NOW YOU ARE A BLANK WALL.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME. I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT LABRAZIO WAS DEAD AND THAT YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT.
I KNEW LABRAZIO WELL. WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT GOING INTO HIDING AND LEAVING A CHILD, NO MATTER HOW FORMIDABLE, TO DO HIS COLLECTING WAS INCONCEIVABLE.
I COULD HAVE HAD YOU KILLED FOR THIS. LABRAZIO WAS A MADE MAN, AND ACCORDING TO THE CODE OF THE BLACK HAND, YOU DESERVED DEATH.
MY FAMILY WILL BE GOING LEGITIMATE AS SOON AS I HAND OVER MY OPERATIONS TO MY SON, TOMMY. I DO NOT WANT MY SINS TO BECOME HIS. AS PER THE CODE, MY TERRITORIES WILL BE DIVIDED BETWEEN YOU, THE CALABRESIS, AND THE FERRARAS.
BUT I PREFERRED TO WATCH YOU. I WAS AMAZED THAT ANY BOY COULD PULL OFF SUCH A RUSE.
BUT AS I SAID, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR BECAUSE OF THE SECOND REASON I ASKED YOU HERE. I AM STEPPING DOWN AS DON OF THE DANTINI FAMILY.
YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT, BUT IN SOME SMALL DEGREE, I HAVE KEPT THE OTHER FAMILIES OFF OF YOU. I HAVE DISTRACTED THEM AT TIMES. TRIED TO REDIRECT THEIR HOSTILITIES.
NOW THAT I WILL BE THERE NO MORE, IT WILL BE A RACE FOR YOUR HEAD. I WANTED TO WARN YOU.


WHY DO YOU CARE?
YOU REMIND ME OF MYSELF. I WAS WITHOUT FAMILY, LIVING ON THE STREETS. I TOOK TO THE GANGS JUST AS YOU HAVE DONE. ALTHOUGH, I MUST ADMIT, NOT AS SKILLFULLY AS YOU. I WASN'T SECRETLY RUNNING AN ORGANIZATION AS A TEENAGE BOY.

I'VE HAD MUCH ADMIRATION FOR YOU. AND I PITIED YOU.
NOW TELL ME THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION I'VE WANTED TO KNOW FOR SO MANY YEARS. HOW DID IT START? WHY DID YOU KILL HIM?

HE KILLED THE ONLY PERSON IN THIS MISERABLE WORLD THAT EVER GAVE A DAMN ABOUT ME.

THEN HE DESERVED TO DIE. I AM SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS.
PLEASE SEE THAT MY SON IS RETURNED SAFELY. FROM THIS DAY ON MY FAMILY IS BLACK HAND NO MORE.

IN THE FOLLOWING MONTHS, THE ESCALATED VIOLENCE BETWEEN THE LABRAZIO, CALABRESI, AND FERRARA FAMILIES DID LITTLE TO HURT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CANNERS. THEY POUNDED THEIR WAY TO THE FRANCHISE'S FIRST AND ONLY UNDEFEATED REGULAR SEASON. BUT THE BITTER EVENTS SURROUNDING THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME WILL ALWAYS LEAVE US WONDERING WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

BOYS, AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SEASON I WAS LOOKING AT A RAG TAG BUNCH OF STREET THUGS. TODAY I'M LOOKING AT A REAL FOOTBALL CLUB!
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHTING FISH-CANNERS! BOYS OF THE GREEN AND THE BLUE!
I WANT EACH OF YOU TO LISTEN... DO YOU HEAR THAT?
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHTING FISH-CANNERS! BOYS OF THE GREEN AND THE BLUUUE!
CANNERS
THERE'S NO STOPPING OUR TOWN'S BOYS! THEY'LL BEAT THE SNOT OUT OF YOOOU! THEY'LL KNOCK OUT YOUR TEETH AND POKE OUT YOUR EYES! AND YOU WON'T SEE US CRYYY!
SO FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHTING FISH-CANNERS! WE HOPE THE OTHER TEAM DON'T DIIIE!

DO YOU SEE WHAT YOU'VE GIVEN THEM? A FEW MONTHS AGO THOSE PEOPLE WERE OUT OF HOPE! THEY HATED THEIR TOWN, AND WORST OF ALL, THEY HATED THEMSELVES!
FOR THEM WE'RE GONNA WIN!!
LET'S GO, BOYS!!
WE'LL MOIDER 'EM!
YEAH!
DON CALABRESI SENDS HIS REGARDS, GOON!
NO!

LET'S BEAT IT!
HARLEY?
G-GOON, IT'S OVER. WE... LOST.
HARLEY?

THE STORYBOOK SEASON OF THE CANNERS CAME TO A TRAGIC CLOSE WITH THE ASSASSINATIONS OF HARLEY LABEAU, ART MOON, CECIL DEWLER, ARNIE CUBBARD, WILLIE HINKLE, ZEKE HERBERT, AND DICK BOYD. THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE TEAM WERE ALL HOSPITALIZED FROM GUNSHOT WOUNDS BUT RECOVERED IN TIME. THE CANNERS HAD TO FORFEIT THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME AND HAVE YET TO HAVE ANOTHER WINNING SEASON, LET ALONE RETURN TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP. THE GOON NEVER PLAYED AGAIN AFTER THAT NIGHT.

THE MALICIOUSNESS OF THE BLACK HAND WAS, IN THE END, THEIR OWN UNDOING. THEY HAD KEPT THE TOWN UNDER NEAR-UNLIVABLE CONDITIONS FOR TOO LONG, AND WHEN THEY STRUCK OUT AT THE ONE THING THAT GAVE THE PEOPLE A LITTLE JOY, A TORRENT OF EMOTION WAS UNLEASHED. THE ENSUING RIOTS ENDED IN THE CORNERING OF THE CALABRESI AND FERRARA GANGS ON LONELY STREET.

NOT A SINGLE MEMBER OF EITHER FAMILY SURVIVED THE BLOODBATH, AND ONLY DEATH WALKED LONELY STREET THAT NIGHT.
TEE-HEE-HEE!
LONELY ST

HEE-HEE-HEE! RISE!
RIIISE!!

RISE!! HA! HA! HA!

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS, WHEN ONE EVIL DIES, ANOTHER EVIL RISES TO TAKE ITS PLACE.
THERE WAS NO REST FOR THE CALABRESI AND FERRARA GANGS.

EMPIRE